

Week Ending Friday, April 5, 2002

**The President's Radio Address**

*March 30, 2002*

Good morning. Almost 7 months have passed since the attack on our country, and the shock and sadness of that day are still with us. For many, the grief and sense of loss will never fully pass, and they are in our thoughts, especially in this holy season.

The entire world is reminded again this week of the hope that lives and endures forever. For Jews and Christians, this is a time of joy and renewal. Passover celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people from oppression, by the hand of a faithful God. And tomorrow, Easter Sunday, many Christians will celebrate a hope that overcomes even death.

These holy days represent some of the most profound hopes of humanity, which are shared in many traditions. We feel our reliance on the Creator who made us. We place our sorrows and cares before Him, seeking God's mercy. We ask forgiveness for our failures, seeking the renewal He can bring.

Americans practice different faiths in churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. And many good people practice no faith at all. For those who observe Easter and Passover, faith brings confidence that failure is never final, and suffering is temporary, and the pains of the Earth will be overcome. We can be confident, too, that evil may be present and it may be strong, but it will not prevail.

On September the 11th, a terrible evil was done to our country. America and the civilized world are now joined together in a great struggle against enemies who have no regard for innocent life. Grave challenges and dangers face us in this war. We cannot predict every turn ahead of us, yet in this season, we are assured that history is of moral design. Justice and cruelty have always been at war, and God is not neutral between them.

His purposes are often defied but never defeated.

I hope that this holy season will bring renewal of faith to those who seek it and comfort to those who need it. And to all who observe these special days, I wish you a joyful Easter and a blessed Passover.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:37 a.m. on March 26 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

**Remarks on the Situation in the Middle East and an Exchange With Reporters in Crawford, Texas**

*March 30, 2002*

**The President.** This morning I made a series of phone calls to world leaders to express my concern, listen to their concerns about the escalating violence in the Middle East.

We are at this point because there has not been enough done to fight off terror. All the leaders in the world must stand up against terror, must do everything in their power to cut off the funding to terrorist organizations, to prevent terrorist organizations from finding safe haven. And that especially applies to Chairman Arafat. I believe he can do a lot more to prevent attacks such as the one that just occurred in Tel Aviv.

I am deeply concerned about the loss of innocent lives. It breaks my heart when children and innocent women and innocent men lose their life. I fully understand Israel's need to defend herself. I respect that. It's a country that has seen a wave of suicide bombers come into the hearts of their cities and kill

innocent people. That country has a right to defend herself.

And as she does so, I urge that their Government, the Israeli Government, make sure that there is a path to peace as she secures her homeland. But they've got to keep in mind the need that there's got to be a peaceful solution at some point. I've been assured by the Israeli Government that—about the well-being of Chairman Arafat and that he won't be harmed.

I have heard him say that, well, in that he's confined, he can't do anything to secure—to help secure the region. I know he's got a lot of forces; he's got a lot of people that listen to him still; and he has got to speak out clearly. He's got to make it absolutely clear that the Palestinian Authority does not support these terrorist activities and use his security forces to prevent them from happening.

I've asked that General Zinni stay in the region. I think it's very important for our country to provide an opportunity for discussions, an opportunity for people to come together, and so Zinni will stay there. He will stay there to continue to push for a process that will ultimately get us into Mitchell, and Mitchell is the best hope for peace. It has been agreed to by the parties. It is an opportunity for those who love peace to have a framework for peace.

Last night the administration supported a U.N. Security Council resolution that urges there to be a cease-fire, to start a process that will end this cycle of violence. Here we are on one of holiest of holidays, and we're worried about people needlessly losing their lives. And our prayers and thoughts go to the families of the victims, and I pray for peace. And I urge all parties to recognize that there are terrorists in this world who can't stand the thought of peace, and all of us—all of us—must work together to condemn, find, and stop terrorist activities.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions.

### **Preventing Terrorism**

**Q.** Mr. President, with this latest terrorist attack on a Tel Aviv cafe tonight with many apparent casualties, does Chairman Arafat in your opinion really have any control over these suicide bombers?

**The President.** I think Chairman Arafat can do a lot more. I truly believe that. I believe he needs to stand up and condemn, in Arabic, these attacks. He's got a security force, admittedly somewhat on the defensive right now. But nevertheless, there is a security force; there is a security apparatus. We've been dealing with the leaders of the security apparatus. And they have got to do a much better job of preventing people from coming into Israel to blow up innocent people.

The leaders in the region must do the same thing. Again, I was pleased that Crown Prince Abdullah spoke out so forcefully for what he called normalization. We support that. But there is no normalcy when day after day killers destroy innocent lives. All the leaders must join with governments such as ours to strongly condemn and stop terrorist activities.

I spoke to Jose Maria Aznar today. He's the head of the EU now, and he told me, he said, you know, the world must fight off these terrorists. And the region can do more, in my judgment. The Iranians must step up and stop sponsoring terrorism. The Syrians must participate. If people want peace in the region, there has got to be a united effort against terror, and I do believe Mr. Arafat can do more.

### **Diplomatic Efforts in the Middle East**

**Q.** Mr. President, you made a lot of phone calls today, but not to Sharon, not to Arafat. Why not, and what is the next U.S. step?

**The President.** Well, first of all, my administration has made a lot of phone calls into the region on a daily basis. Secretary of State Powell will be speaking to Prime Minister Sharon again.

**Q.** Today?

**The President.** Yes, today; soon, as I understand it, unless this current—this recent bombing has put the Prime Minister into a Cabinet meeting and therefore won't be able to take a phone call. But he was supposed to have made a call, like, right now.

Nevertheless, we're in constant touch with these governments, and the next step is to continue our call and our efforts and our push to fight off terror. It appears to me these aren't just isolated incidents. I mean, there's a pattern, a routine, and a constancy.

And so we will continue to lead, to talk and urge world leaders, particularly those in the region, to do everything they can to shut off the capacity of people to come and bomb.

**Q.** Why wasn't Arafat called by Powell today?

**The President.** He may be doing that; I just don't know. Mr. Arafat, he doesn't need a phone call from me. All he's got to do is watch what I just said, and that message will be delivered to him.

**Q.** Mr. President, have we reached a point where there needs to be a more aggressive and more visible and public U.S. effort to quell the violence? And will that include greater outreach to the nations in the region?

**The President.** Well, you may recall the Vice President has just returned from the region, which is a significant outreach. We're spending a great deal of time, in our capacity as the leader of a coalition against the war on terror, to continue not only our war in Afghanistan and elsewhere but also continuing to fight terror in this region.

And every phone call I make, I remind people that if you're interested in peace—and the leaders I've talked to are interested in peace—we have all got to come together to stop terror. Our role is very visible, and our role is very active. And I firmly believe that we can achieve a peace in the region, but not until—not until—there is a concerted, united effort to rout terror out.

Because what we're seeing is—we're seeing—for example, in South Carolina, I remember talking to you all and saying—this was on Thursday, saying—or Wednesday, saying that I was optimistic that we had a chance to get into Tenet. And by the time I got on the airplane and landed in Georgia, there had been this awful suicide bombing. And so it is a—it's clear to me the more progress we make toward achieving a cease-fire or meaningful security discussions, the more a killer organization will try to disrupt the process.

And therefore, the best way to make sure that we can get some meaningful dialog going is to secure the—is to help secure the region, in particular, Israel's homeland, by a united front against terror. It's essential that we—"we" meaning those who long for a peace—and again I repeat to you, every leader I've

talked to said we need peace. But there needs to be a focused coalition effort in the region against peace—I mean, against terror, for peace.

### **Preventing Terrorism**

**Q.** You mentioned a moment ago that Iran and Syria need to do more.

**The President.** Yes, I believe they do.

**Q.** Can you identify other countries in the region who need to do more than they're doing now?

**The President.** All the countries in the region must condemn terror, speak clearly about terror. I appreciate the fact that the Saudis have spoken about a vision for peace. I thought that was a very important statement. It recognized Israel's right to exist. And that's essential. The corollary to that is, in order for Israel to exist, terror must stop.

I can understand why the Israeli Government takes the actions they take. Their country is under attack. Every day there has been a suicide bombing, and every day the Government sees the loss of innocent life.

On the other hand, I understand why some Palestinians feel so hopeless. There is a—the loss of innocent life on the Palestinian side is too much. But the Palestinians, particularly those who long for a peaceful resolution, the independent statehood of the Palestinians—is a part of that peaceful solution, but they must do everything in their power to stop terrorist activity.

**Q.** On Iran and Syria, do you have any evidence that those countries are directly involved in the latest series of bombings?

**The President.** No, I do not have evidence. But I saw, for example, that Syria once again walked out of the U.N. when there was a reasonable resolution put forward. That should say something.

And secondly, I understand the connections between Hezbollah and Iran. And there has been no evidence—I don't know who's claiming credit for this bombing. I haven't seen Hezbollah's name mentioned. But nevertheless, that's terror; that's a terrorist organization, and—but no, I have no direct evidence. Nevertheless, I do know their influence in the region. And if they are interested in a peaceful resolution, they too need to be active about cutting off funds. And as you

may recall, there was a ship that was intercepted by the Israelis, that came from Iran full of weapons.

And so my point is, is that there needs to be a focused international effort to condemn—strongly condemn—as well as rout out terrorist activities. Otherwise, we will have a difficult problem in getting to a peaceful accord.

There has been a framework laid out, and now the efforts will be focused, like they have been, on getting into the framework. In the meantime, Israel will defend herself. And again, I understand that.

You will recall, as I said in my statement, that I hope Israel keeps in mind that there needs to be a road for peace. It's in the Israelis' interests, in my judgment, not only to defend herself but to keep in mind that there has got to be a peaceful resolution in order for her people to be able to grow up in a secure and peaceful world.

#### ***Israeli Action Against Chairman Arafat***

**Q.** Can I follow up on that point? Do you think that—it seems as if, even if they're not trying to physically harm Arafat, that they're trying to undermine him, undermine his leadership with the Palestinians. Do you think that serves any purpose?

**The President.** I think Mr. Arafat could have done more 3 weeks ago and can do more today. I know I have been disappointed in his unwillingness to go 100 percent toward fighting terror. That includes using his security forces to help prevent suicide bombers from crossing certain lands, and that also means speaking out clearly, in his native tongue.

I fully understand the frustrations of the Israeli people. I sympathize, and I sympathize with the frustrations of the Palestinian people, those who long for normalcy, those who want to send their kids to school and go to work. There's got to be a much more concerted effort by Chairman Arafat and others to stop terror. Terror is—so long as there's this reign of terror, there will be no peace. So therefore, stopping terror will make the conditions ripe for peace.

**Q.** Mr. President, did we know in advance about the invasion? And what's your position now? Should the Israelis get out of the com-

pound? Should they continue the military action or quit?

**The President.** Israel is a democratically elected government, and the Government is responding to the will of the people for there to be more security. And Israel will make the decisions necessary to defend herself.

My point to the Israeli Government is: As you do so, keep in mind there must be an avenue toward a peaceful settlement. As you defend yourself—and you have the right to do so—please keep in mind and work with the region to develop a strategy that will end up with a peaceful settlement.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; U.S. Special Envoy to the Middle East Gen. Anthony Zinni, USMC (Ret.); Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel. The President also referred to the Mitchell report, the Report of the Sharm el-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee, issued April 30, 2001, and the Tenet plan, the Israeli-Palestinian ceasefire and security plan of June 13, 2001, negotiated by Director of Central Intelligence George J. Tenet.

#### **Statement on the Death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother of the United Kingdom**

*March 30, 2002*

Laura and I were deeply saddened at the news of the passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. On behalf of the American people, we send our heartfelt condolences to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and to the people of the United Kingdom for this tremendous loss. She was a pillar of strength and inspiration to many people all over the world.

Laura and I and her many admirers throughout this Nation will miss her.